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619 to have crossed later to the other side where they settled and became, in
173 the course of time, independent sub-tribal sections.[1] In the case of the Kupa the tradition is more concrete; it describes them as Ebe people who have crossed the Kontagora river (called in Nupe Eku, to cross the river is, in Nupe, *ld 'kú pà*, and this is supposed to be the origin of their tribal name) in the time of the big Nupe wars of conquest, about 1800. The Kusopa, the Forest Tenders, appear in Nupe tradition out of nothing. Somehow they grew into a separate sub-tribe the identity of which is based on their habitat in the thick inland forest west of the Kaduna and also on their special occupation, which is the cultivation of kola-nut trees. Gwagba is a deprecatory nickname given originally to a small section of 'Nupe *zam*' from Gbara, followers and henchmen of the Nupe kings who, in the wars for the Nupe throne, fled to Zuguma. *Gwagba* means, literally, Those who threw up their Hands, the Defeated, but it is applied to-day to the whole group of Nupe living in and around Zuguma town. The Benu, finally, represent another sub-tribe of recent origin, formed in historical times. They are people of Bornu origin (*Benu* being the Nupe corruption of *Bornu*), from Kukawa, the ancient capital of Bornu, who came to Nupe country towards the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of *Etsu* Ma'azũ and settled, with his permission, in Trans-Kaduna. They came as wealthy traders, bringing with them certain new agricultural techniques—onion growing—horses and cattle (the latter soon disappeared in the tsetse-infested country). They soon became the dominant group, economically as well as politically, in the region where they settled, but they Nupe-ized themselves, intermarried with the Nupe, forgot their language, and abandoned most of their original cultural traits. Thus they are to-day a section of the Nupe, speaking the Nupe language, and conforming in their whole social structure to the standards of Nupe culture. Only their great annual festival, the *gani*, and the title of their chief, *Zonuwa*, are reminiscent of the ancient culture of Bornu.[2]

619 The name Nupe has also been extended to other originally alien
563 groups living in Nupe country, which have become Nupe-ized and are hardly distinguishable to-day from the people among whom they live. In many villages and towns of Nupe we find groups known by the name of *Konú*, Prisoners of War,[3] or Eyagi-Nupe, Yoruba-Nupe, people of Yoruba origin, who are the descendants of slaves captured in the wars of the Fulani kings of Nupe against the Yoruba; they were later freed and, by order of the king, settled in various districts of the kingdom. In Bida town I met the makers of horse-trappings—a craft imported from Hausa—who assured me that they were Hausa no longer. 'Yes, our fathers were Hausa,' they admitted; 'but we are Nupe'—claiming Nupe-

[1] They speak, in fact, the same dialect—proof that the tradition is not without historical foundation.

[2] See Sir Richmond Palmer, *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, 1936, p. 148. I have given a more detailed description of this process of cultural fusion in *Man*, 1938, 85.

[3] *Konú* means 'war' in Fulfulde; the adoption of this term reflects cultural conditions in the early times of the Fulani régime, when the rulers still used their own language.

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ization after barely one generation. The people in the north of Nupe country, near the boundary of Gbari, are known as *Gbari bautd*, Gbari slaves. They represent the original Gbari population of an area conquered by the Nupe and incorporated into the kingdom about 1800. In the north-east, too, Nupe culture is absorbing groups of Gbari, in a smooth and silent development which is still observable to-day. In Kataeregi, for example, in the north-east corner of Beni country, one or two old men still speak Gbari and remember their tribal origin; but the younger people speak only Nupe, regarding themselves, and being accepted, as Nupe and Beni full and proper. On the river, in the south, we have another group which has for some time been under Nupe political influence and has partly adopted Nupe language and culture: the Kakanda. They are not, however, regarded as part of the Nupe tribe —or not yet. Whether or not the consolidation of their cultural links will advance further and will eventually lead to an adoption into the tribe we cannot say for certain; perhaps the Kakanda will, with the completion of cultural assimilation, some day be regarded as another, thirteenth, Nupe sub-tribe.[1] In one or two cases, finally, people of one sub-tribe have emigrated into the district of another sub-tribe, living there as settlers in a 'foreign' land. Thus we find a group of Beni villages in Dibo country, emigrants from Beni during the Fulani wars, and also two small groups of Ebe in Trans-Kaduna, in the area of the section which calls itself 'pure Nupe'.

Thus one can 'become' a Nupe—*a ze Nupe*, they have become Nupe, is what the Nupe say of their cultural proselytes. It is, of course, impossible to define precisely the point when cultural assimilation warrants, or might warrant, inclusion in the tribe. But it may seem as if this elastic application of the tribal name, which takes into account *de facto* cultural similarities, contradicted the 'theoretical' and 'conceptual' unit in which we saw the definition of the tribe. The unobtrusive assimilation of a small group on the fringes of some Nupe section and its eventual absorption in this section (as in the case of the Kataeregi Beni) can be easily understood. But the so-to-speak official inclusion of a new section, under a separate heading, seems to presuppose something like a cultural tribunal which grants tribal membership to new, 'naturalized' groups. This contradiction is due not to an obscurity in our definition but to an obscurity in the facts themselves—and an obscurity which cannot be eliminated. The substratum with which we are dealing has, as it were, changed under our hands. The concept of tribal culture has changed into the concept of a culture vested in a political unit and its deliberate, conscious expansion. The proselytes of the Nupe tribe or Nupe culture were in reality proselytes of the Nupe kingdom.[2] (It is,

[1] A few informants, in fact, already classified them as a sub-tribe of Nupe—but these were informants from sub-tribes adjacent to the Kakanda, that is, from groups which, so to speak, could directly watch the cultural changes. Groups farther away kept to the established, traditional definition of the Kakanda as a separate tribe.

[2] This is the conception of the people themselves. All informants spoke to me of the various sub-tribes as having 'become one through Tsoede' (the ancestor-

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in fact, doubtful if a tribe not backed by any political organization could make proselytes on any larger scale.) Later we shall see more clearly how it happens that tribe and kingdom become, for the people, one and the same thing. But the mark of the 'theoretical' tribal distinction is not obscured completely. It is visible in the qualified adoption of these new 'naturalized' sections. They 'have become Nupe'; but they are still called 'Gbari slaves' or Yoruba-Nupe. And perhaps now, since the expanding Nupe kingdom no longer exists, there will be no thirteenth sub-tribe of Kakanda-Nupe, after all.

THE SUB-TRIBE

The fact of common origin which is excluded from the concept of the tribe becomes an essential element in the definition of the sub-tribe. The sub-tribe is thus not a 'tribe' on a smaller scale; it differs essentially from the wider unit of the tribe. If the Nupe tribe possesses no external symbols, costumes, or body markings, such emblems exist to some extent for the sub-tribe. The Nupe practise body and face markings, *etsa*, 'patterns', which are cut into the skin of newborn babies, male and female, and which differ in the different sub-tribes.[1] The sub-tribe, too, has its ideology in which the conception of unity and differentiation from other groups is expressed. The ideological criteria are two: one we have just discussed, the unity of origin and of historical continuity. The other is, again, the criterion of cultural unity. But the physical fact of the smallness of the group as compared with the tribe makes 'culture' here a more concrete, so to speak more concentrated reality. No Nupe term which corresponds to our 'sub-tribe' or 'section' exists. The Nupe refer to the various sub-tribes as to 'lands', they speak of *kin* Beni, land of the Beni, or *kin* Kusopa, land of the Kusopa, and even of *kin* Kyedye, land of the Kyedye, a 'land' which consists of a narrow strip of territory running across river banks and islets. The sub-tribe is thus, like the tribe, a territorial unit. But again the fact of physical size changes the meaning of the concept. The smaller locality is, in fact, more of one 'land'; it implies a more unified environment. This is partly expressed already in the names of the sub-tribes, some of which refer to the nature of the environment in which the group lives and to the nature of the occupation by which it earns its livelihood. The Bataci or Marsh Dwellers are a group of marsh-land farmers and fishermen whose hunting-grounds are the pools and backwaters of the Niger. The Kusopa or Forest Tenders work the famous kola-nut plantations of Laboži and

king of Nupe), or explained the development as due to the fact that '*one Etsu* established his rule (or law) over the whole country'.

[1] I must add, however, that even here these external symbols of group unity are not quite unequivocal. Fashion is changing the markings to-day—and there is no reason to assume that this has not always been so. I have seen fathers and sons whose faces bore different markings. The markings of the Bida people, like other fashions associated with the capital of the kingdom, have been adopted by the people of the districts. And the modern Bida and Beni markings are in turn said to have been adopted originally from the Yoruba, whose less conspicuous facial marks the Nupe found 'nicer' than their own crude slashes. (See Appendix II.)

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121 origin and conquest, state organization and alien domination.[1] I will not go too deeply into this controversial question. But we cannot pass without comment the fact that the structure of the Nupe state as it exists to-day, with its ruling class of Fulani conquerors, and also its growth so far as we can with any claim to accuracy trace it back in history, indeed support this theory of the origin of the state.

Our discussion of the principles of state organization has thus led to an historical interpretation. Indeed the description of Nupe kingdom would be incomplete without the description of its growth and development. Its inter-tribal and inter-cultural nature cannot be fully understood without the inclusion of the historical viewpoint. Our three-fold conceptual system of cultural unit, community, and state must itself be envisaged under the aspect of a dynamic process rather than of a static differentiation. For the deliberate political co-ordination of forms of conduct must tend to influence other spheres of cultural activity as well. In Nupe as everywhere, social patterns, common ideal types, spring up by themselves as 'natural products of long association'.[2] Political unification goes hand in hand with dissemination of culture and with an extension and reinterpretation (in the widest sense of the word) of racial and community boundaries. The 'inter-cultural' and 'inter-tribal' state gives way to a new 'state culture' and a new paramount group-unit, the nation.

121 563 It will be for a later chapter to examine how and how far this unification has been achieved in the Nupe state. But we must point out at once that this absorption of heterogeneous elements could only achieve a relative unity. The antagonism between the original heterogeneity and the subsequent unification is never allowed to disappear completely. It survives in certain forms of cultural and racial discrimination. The culture of Nupe, more correctly the culture typical of that section which formed the core in the historical growth of the kingdom, became the representative culture of the whole country, set up as a standard and 'ideal type' for the heterogeneous population. The sections of the Nupe tribe which were the carriers of this culture became the representative group of 'real' Nupe, sharply distinguished from the groups which have become Nupe-ized and absorbed in the state in the process of political expansion. A tribal and territorial section thus gained the position of a cultural *élite*, considerations of political status came to determine the evaluation of cultural features, and facts of cultural and tribal extraction were re-interpreted in the sense of political class distinctions. Here we understand the anomalies in the application of the name Nupe which we discovered in our discussion of Tribe and Culture: why the people in the capital regard the Nupe spoken in the districts and on the borders of the country as an inferior brand; or why the Nupe still speak of 'Gbari slaves' although culturally this tribal section has become indistinguishable from the Nupe proper. The 'real' Nupe call themselves *kintsoži*, Owners of the Land, as against all who have come later into the country —settlers, aliens, citizens of Greater Nupe. For all the groups outside of

[1] F. Oppenheimer, *The State*, 1923.
[2] A. E. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 222.

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the 'core' of the kingdom, whether they are Nupe, aliens, or Nupe-ized aliens, the Nupe have a common name: *zaži kati*, 'Outside Peoples', and the cultural evaluation implied in this term is felt acutely by these groups. It was extremely interesting to see how strongly the people of Lemu, Nupe-ized since three generations only, resented being called *zaži kati*, although they frankly admitted their Gbari origin. 'This name', they said, 'does not apply to us; we have been Nupe and Beni for a long time. The Gbari in the north and east, in Wushishi and beyond Kataeregi, they are Outside Peoples.'

The Fulani conquest added a new chapter to this ambiguous history of cultural and political unification. But here 'representative' and 'absorbed' groups have exchanged places. The Fulani conquerors of Nupe, numerically an insignificant minority, were absorbed completely by the culture of the people whom they subjugated. Some of the Fulani came from nomadic herdsmen stock; the majority belonged most probably to the 'town Fulani' (as they call themselves), who had long been settled in the northern Hausa states and whose culture had become identical with that of Hausa. The former surrendered their identity completely; the latter had little, if anything, of their own to give. The Hausa traits visible in Nupe culture to-day did not reach the country through the Fulani; and Mohammedanism, the religion of the Fulani conquerors, was firmly established already at the time of the early Fulani infiltration. In Nupe the Fulani lost their language[1] and the last characteristics of their race and original culture. Racially, after generations of intermarriage, they are indistinguishable from their subjects; culturally, they are as much Nupe as the Nupe themselves. Many are even eager to step into the cultural heritage of the country over which they rule. They read and quote the history of ancient Nupe with the same enthusiasm and pride with which they learn or talk about their own historical heroes, the first Fulani emissaries.[2] Yet they remain a separate social group, conscious of its alien origin, and still distinguished by a special tribal name: they call themselves, and are called by their subjects, *goiži* (a name which distinguishes these settled, 'town Fulani' from the nomadic cattle people, who are known as *bororóži*), never Nupe. They are a 'representative' group in a different sense—the small *élite* of conquerors and rulers. The historical memory of their alien origin—for it is only this to-day—buttresses their detached social position. Racial antagonism which might have disappeared in a homogeneous community here, in the framework of the state, blending with the antagonism of class, remains alive, and even strengthens with its sentiments the inner tension of the society. It flares up with every open friction between rulers and ruled. We have again a political and social cleavage in the guise of 'racial' discrimination.[3]

[1] *Etsu* Mohamadu (1897–1914) was given the nickname '*Etsu* with two tongues', being the last Fulani ruler who—already a striking exception—could still speak Fulfulde.

[2] For some time I carried on a correspondence (in Hausa) with two of the most prominent members of the Nupe-Fulani community who had asked me to let them have all information I could obtain on the ancient history of Nupe.

[3] The following is a significant anecdote: the *Etsu* Nupe once confided to me

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121 563 Visualize this intricate racial and cultural pattern: two *élites* of different order—*kintsoši* and Fulani—and surrounding them, almost in concentric circles, ethnic groups of varying cultural dissimilitude, each cultural grade also a grade on the scale of political evaluation. This is indeed the exact picture of the historical growth of Nupe kingdom. Through conquests and expansion, with fluid, ever-changing boundaries, Nupe kingdom maintained its conspicuous centre, the core of its political and cultural growth. Like a tree, it grew from the centre, and you can still trace the rings which mark its growth.

FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM

121 Before embarking on the historical account we must clarify the concept of 'history' as we propose to use it. For there is a certain ambiguity in the term 'history' as it is used by anthropologists. History can mean two things: first, what we may call 'objective' history, that is, the series of events which we, the investigators, describe and establish in accordance with certain 'objective', universal criteria of connexion and sequence. Second, the 'ideological' history, which exists in the society which we study, and which describes and arranges events in accordance with accepted traditions about past happenings and developments. The two may coincide (as they do in modern history); or the second may at least supply some source of information for the first. But also it may have significance only as a sociological datum *per se*, i.e. as a system of accepted beliefs and traditions influencing social behaviour in the group. As such, it is often indistinguishable from mythology and from what Malinowski has called significantly the 'mythical charter' of customs and existing cultural usages.[1] Different societies may stress in a different measure either the mythical, supernatural or the rational, pseudo-scientific nature of what they accept as an account of their past. The Nupe are what we may call an historically-minded people. The highest, constantly invoked authority for things existing is, to the Nupe, the account of things past—but an account which is clothed in terms of a sober, pseudo-scientific 'history'. Such is also the nature of the Nupe tradition of the origin of their kingdom. Only for the more recent periods do we possess 'objective' sources; the earliest period of Nupe kingdom is described only in their own 'ideological history'.

173 The earliest history of Nupe centres round the figure of Tsoede or Edegi,[2] the culture hero and mythical founder of Nupe kingdom. The genealogies of Nupe kings which are preserved in many places in Nupe country, and which have also found their way into the earliest written records of Nupe history which were compiled by Mohammedan scholars

his grievance against a certain little unruly relative of his whom he believed to have intrigued against him. He added: 'All Nupe are bad people, you know.' The said relative, himself, of course, as much Fulani as the *Etsu*, retaliated by informing me that 'all Fulani were liars'.

[1] B. Malinowski, in *Encycl. Soc. Sc.*, London, 1931, vol. iv, p. 640.

[2] Tsoede is, linguistically, a contraction of *Etsu*, or *'tsu Ede;* the Nupe more often use the name Tsoede, the Hausa the name Edegi.

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country.[1] But villages and tribal sections were frequently involved in the wars of the kingdom, either themselves causing wars by rebelling against the central government, or being forced to take sides in the wars which the kingdom waged against other groups. Thus the Beni and Gbedegi sided with Bida against the rebellious Kusopa, and again in the Kyedye war, while other tribal sections, such as the riverain Bataci, Kupa, and Ebagi, came to the aid of the Kyedye. In the later times of the kingdom, to which my records chiefly refer, the wars were indeed largely caused by internal disturbances and were directed against rebellious provinces or feudal lords—being reconquests rather than conquests. Historical records mention ten major wars in the thirty years that preceded the British conquest, between 1864 and 1895. Most of these wars are still vividly remembered, and old men would even recall characteristic incidents in the various campaigns. My informants, not unnaturally, greatly extolled the soldierly virtues of the Nupe people. But there is also Barth's testimony that the Nupe army, especially the cavalry, was well known in the Hausa states.[2] Twice, in fact, (in 1880) the Nupe were called to Hausa to help their allies, the Emirs of Kontagora and Gwandu, to put down rebellions in their countries.

The Nupe army was comparatively loosely organized. It possessed only a small nucleus of regular troops, represented in the king's bodyguard; the rest of the army consisted of levies of slaves, volunteers, and mercenary soldiers, raised by the houses of the feudal nobility. But these household troops, too, were largely composed of trained and experienced soldiers.

The king's bodyguard comprised both infantry and cavalry. The foot-soldiers, called *dogari nya dahári* (i.e. 'guards on foot'), were equipped with guns or bows and arrows, and were under the command of the *Etsu Dogari*. The troops who carried guns were mostly slaves, the sons of slaves from the king's household, the others were free men, mercenary soldiers—among them many foreigners, from Hausa, Bornu, and Yoruba—who had taken service under the *Etsu* Nupe. Under *Etsu* Maliki this royal bodyguard numbered 80 men. The royal horse troops, a slightly larger group, were called *lefidi*, after the cotton-wool armour which they wore. Their weapons were swords, spears, and big leather shields. They were commanded by the *Etsu Lefidi* (who was also called *Zarmi*). One of my informants for the present description was the *Etsu Lefidi* of the royal house of Usman Zaki. He was of Hausa origin, a freed slave and the son of an *Etsu Lefidi* who had served under Usman Zaki himself. The horse troops were composed again of slaves and mercenary soldiers. The slaves who served in the royal cavalry were the sons of titled slaves, every court slave of rank having to send one of his sons into the *Etsu*'s bodyguard, and the volunteers were all foreigners. In the reign of *Etsu* Maliki the *lefidi* numbered 100 men.

The troops which were contributed by the various houses of the

[1] The only exception was the warlike Kyedye sub-tribe.

[2] Barth, op. cit. iv, p. 545. Lander reports that Mallam Dendo could 'command 3,000 horsemen, well equipped, and an uncountable number of foot-soldiers' (op. cit. ii, p. 296).

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Beni and re-established the integrity of the Beni confederacy in the form of a royal domain. *Etsu* Maliki, levying tax upon tax on a country depleted by civil war, and having to defend a weakened kingdom both against powerful feudal lords and a restive population, invented a new system of government: he now applied the *ajele* system which was formerly restricted to the Outside Peoples to the kingdom itself. He divided the country into six large districts placed in charge of his delegates—trusted slaves, who, accompanying the fief-holders on their tax-collecting expeditions from fief to fief, collected the royal tax at the head of an armed force strong enough to cow into submission rebellious subjects as well as any too independent feudal lords.[1] When *Etsu* Abubakari came to the throne, he found all the wells of supply dried up. The taxing system of his predecessors had left nothing in the country that could be made into money—nothing except human beings. He started raiding his own provinces to find slaves for the market, breaking down the most fundamental distinction of political status, that between the citizens of the kingdom proper and the conquered *zaźi kati*. But, my informant added philosophically when he finished his sad story: 'A gown is dirty—you wash it; behold, the water is dirty—with what are you going to wash the water?'

In this ever-changing pattern of feudal administration the capital stands somewhat apart, being administered directly by the king and his officers of state. The threefold territorial and tribal division of the kingdom into an innermost core, a kingdom 'proper', and an outside area reappears on a smaller scale in the division of Bida and its population: here we have *ba nin*, the Inner City, where the Beni of pre-Fulani Bida live; the Greater Bida, and finally the Strangers' Quarter, *ldlemi*. But the order of status and prerogatives is not the same. Greater Bida included all the people who had come to Bida when it became the capital of the kingdom—the members of the ruling class, Fulani and Nupe nobility, with all their followers, hangers-on, with traders, Mallams, warriors, drummers. A privileged class here again, this group was free from all taxation, and this privilege also extended to all settlements which they founded, the *tunga* in the country, which were worked by their dependants, slaves, and serfs. The Nupe craft-guilds which had come with the Fulani rulers from the former capital of the kingdom, Rabá, were equally exempted from tax save for an annual 'salute' to the *Etsu*. To the people of *ba nin* the people of Greater Bida, Fulani and Nupe alike, are 'strangers'. But in the kingdom they themselves, *kintsoźi*, Owners of the Land, were a group deprived of all privileges. They were taxed exactly as the other peasants in the country; and so also, by gate-tolls and market dues, which were collected by the king's police force, were all Nupe from the country who came to sell their goods in Bida market.

Finally, there are the strangers—'real' strangers—of whom this cosmopolitan capital was (and is) always full: people from Hausa and Bornu, Arabs from the Sudan and Tripoli, Yoruba from the south.

[1] These districts were: Cekpā (the country of Patigi), Gbakokpā (Badeggi and Kacha), Eggā, Beni, Kyedye, and Kusopa.

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563 They come to Bida as traders or itinerant artisans, some for a short
439 period only, others to stay. The trading caravans from the north stop
outside the town gate in the *zongu*, camp, reserved for them. There are
[485] three such *zongu* in Bida, each situated on the territory of one of the
royal houses; the caravans must stop in the camp that belongs to the
ruling house—another expression of that comprehensive dynastic
division into three. The traders from the south, individual traders and
[621] the strangers who settle down in Bida for longer periods, perhaps per-
manently, live in *lálemi* under their own headmen, the *Sarkin Hausawa*
(or *Madúgu*, as he was originally called) and the *Sarkin Yorubawa* (or
Asari), the Chief of the Hausa and the Chief of the Yoruba. These two
men are the recognized ward-heads of the aliens' quarter, and latterly
have held an official position on the Bida Town Council. Strangers from
the rich countries of north and south were always welcome in Nupe.
[651] They were treated with special consideration by the rulers of Bida, they
paid no regular taxes, only comparatively small market dues, and they
were looked after by their own headmen, who were appointed to watch
the interests of their fellow countrymen, as, for instance, in all matters
concerning financial transactions. This treatment of strangers contrasts
curiously with the ruthless treatment of the native peasants. It reflects
the vital part that trade played in this country, in the households of this
society which depended for its existence on foreign markets where im-
ported arms, horses, and all the paraphernalia of court life might be
bought, and where the valuable commodities of the kingdom, embroid-
ered gowns, beads, brass- and silverware, and slaves might be sold.

621 Cutting across this threefold division of Bida there exists another
554 division, still more important for the life of the town: the division into
571 small local units, factions rather than organized town wards, which form
themselves more or less spontaneously round the houses of the power-
ful nobility. This is, in fact, how the Bida people refer to the different
parts of the town; they call them by the title of the most prominent
member of the nobility who has his house in that locality, *efu Ndeji*, or
efu Dzwoáfu, *efu Sokyara*, and so forth. This link of locality is explained
partly by the fact that powerful men tended to settle their henchmen,
slaves, and serfs in their neighbourhood, and partly by the fact that the
people of the locality were ready to acknowledge as their patron the
member of the titled nobility, living in their midst, who at the time had
the greatest influence, the man whose rank and power promised protec-
tion and support to those who rallied round him. But it is not the strong,
permanent link of the kind we found in the Nupe village. Nor is there
real continuity in this voluntary allegiance of a group of commoners to
a noble patron. As the ranks change hands so the allegiance will change;
every change on the political horizon may dissolve the local faction and
reset the face of the town.

621 Just as these rank-holders are themselves dependent upon the favour
571 of the king and the royal house, and as they group themselves in accor-
dance with that tripartite dynastic division, so these small local factions
are subordinated to the threefold arrangement. We remember the three
ekpā, the three 'banks', on which Bida is built: the large number of *efu*,

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would happen: 'you give the *egba* half this sum, he will quash the case, and you will still have a profit of 5*s*. Of course, if a larger sum is involved this is not so easy, for such an amount is difficult to hush up, and too many people would know about it.'

The judicial procedure in the capital followed, till recently, two different principles: the *sheri'a gboró*, 'straight judgement', for pagans, and the *sheri'a nya kurani*, 'judgement according to the Koran', for Mohammedans. The former represented the 'customary law' of the country, which would do justice to the local pagan customs; it also implied the oath on the sacred objects of pagan Nupe, especially the chain of Tsoede. The latter followed the written Mohammedan law and implied the oath on the Koran. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, on the open market—be it flogging, *shelá*, or capital punishment. In the case of political offences and in the case of men of rank, royal princes, or members of the high nobility, the execution took place under the cover of night and in the secrecy of their own houses. Whether this 'preferential' treatment expressed a last privilege granted to the ruling classes or whether such secrecy was thought to uphold the morale of the feudal kingdom I cannot say.[1]

All the various crimes and offences listed in our table became actionable only when there was a plaintiff. The state itself did not undertake to prosecute unless it was appealed to first by a person bringing a charge against some other person—with one exception: the crime *lèse-majesté*. The widespread knowledge with regard to this crime and its punishment in districts and groups which certainly never came into personal contact with the king precludes the assumption that in this case, too, the legal executive waited for a concrete charge being brought by the plaintiff in question, i.e. the king. Rather we must assume that the crime became actionable in an absolute sense, whenever and wherever it was committed, provided that witnesses of the act existed. Whether the information about the crime reached the central authority through private information or denunciation, or through the official channels of delegates and sub-delegates, I cannot say; but the important fact is that here the state took the initiative in prosecuting the offender. We have here the instance of an indictable offence in the modern sense of the word—a legal definition unparalleled in any known primitive system of law.

In this comprehensive and strongly centralized jurisdiction the political system of Nupe achieved its strongest hold over the peoples of the kingdom. Here the co-ordination of morality, the uniformity of cultures of which we have spoken, is secured by the most effective weapon, the coercive machinery of state jurisdiction. We possess certain evidence which shows that this comprehensive co-ordination was achieved gradually, and that the political system extended its judicial

[1] I have referred already to the ancient, pre-Fulani, judicial organization of the *ledu*, the 'King's Hangmen', who lived in villages on the Niger and there, far from the king's town, executed the criminals who were condemned to death (see p. 73). It is interesting to mention here certain stories current in Bida which record that the *ledu* organization was still used in the time of *Etsu* Usman against rebels of royal blood, who were imprisoned in Giragi, the *ledu* town closest to Bida.

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which, in the interest of efficiency, has evolved centralized control of labour and means of production on a comparatively large scale, comes closer than any other Nupe craft to the principle of the modern factory system.

We have already seen that in the group at large, i.e. in the glass-workers' guild, a similar intensive co-operation obtains. Its organization falls to the guild-head, who assigns the different tasks to the various workshops and is responsible for the general planning of production. This planning must take into account the varying conditions of the market, and we find, in fact, that the guild-head, without interfering with the commercial transactions of the individual workshop, regularly consults traders and middlemen who visit the *masagá* quarter, and maps out accordingly the scheme of work for his community. On my many visits to the *masagá* I found that the guild-head could always tell me what kind of work was carried out in the various workshops, or when a particular workshop would start on a new task. The guild-head, who styles himself *Masagá*, has his own workshop, where his sons and brothers are working. He does not often work there himself, but certain difficult tasks, such as the making of very big, heavy bangles, which fetch the highest price, he alone can perform. The guild-head assists his co-workers with advice and practical help, also with small loans of money for the purchase of raw material or fuel; he arbitrates in internal quarrels, and he is, like all Nupe guild-heads, the accredited representative of his guild at the Nupe court.

The ever-expanding business of the Bida glass industry involves an almost permanent need of new labour. Formerly the glass-workers bought slaves and trained them in the craft in order to enlarge their machinery of production. To-day they are regularly accepting apprentices. In 1936 five young men were being trained as glass-workers. An apprentice applies to the guild-head, who will then place him in charge of a certain workshop. The training is calculated to take three years, during which time the apprentices continue to live in their own homes and come to the *masagá* quarter only to work. But when their apprenticeship is completed they not only move into the *masagá* quarter, but are expected to marry *masagá* women (as did also the slaves in former days). This adoption into the kinship group is considered essential and is as much a qualification for the practice of the craft as is the technical training itself. Thus the monopoly of the glass-workers is kept intact, and no new branches can be established outside their organization. Kinship interests and kinship co-operation are enlisted in the service of professional co-operation and solidarity and in maintaining the continuity of a highly specialized, monopolized and almost secret, technique of production. Economic interests, in turn, are seen to be sufficiently powerful to effect a radical adjustment in the kinship structure, and to create, in a patrilineal society, a matrilineal enclave.

WEAVERS

The weavers, called *edeluciši*, present another instance of the tripartite organization of Bida crafts. Each of the three *ekpā* of the town harbours one of the three guild sections of the weavers. However,

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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbă. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s.* to 12*s.*, according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

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DIVISION OF LABOUR BETWEEN THE SEXES (II)

In none of the industrial activities described on the preceding pages women take any part, except, indirectly, in weaving. But there exist also certain special women's crafts—again, 'individual' crafts—the technique of which is known only to the women and the proceeds from which are women's property. We may note that the men are much more ignorant about women's crafts than they are about the special activities of the women in connexion with agriculture and housework, i.e. cooking, palm-oil manufacture, and so forth. I could always obtain very reliable information on cooking or shea-butter and palm-oil manufacture from men; but information obtained from men on, say, pottery, proved superficial and misleading. Often, in fact, the men refer you to the women rather than venture any information themselves. Woman's craftwork is thus much more specifically and exclusively a woman's concern. It is also more self-contained than cooking and similar activities, being hardly connected with the productive activities of the men. This is most clearly shown by the fact that in craftwork the women must produce their own means of production, unlike, for example, in shea-nut manufacture, in which the women use roast-ovens built by the men, and that, for this purpose, the women have evolved special forms of comparatively large-scale co-operation. At the same time women's crafts are much less widespread than women's other activities. The three crafts peculiar to women, indigo dyeing, pottery, and weaving (a special type of weaving), occur only in certain localities and social groups; there are large numbers of women in Nupe who do not practise any handicraft.

We have seen already that indigo dyeing by women is practised only in the few *konú* groups in Nupe country, where the men are the weavers and the women the dyers (see p. 235). The women's craftwork goes beyond this partnership; the women dye not only the cotton-thread which is used later by the men in weaving, but also any kind of ready-made cloth, old and new, that is brought to them by outside customers. For this work they charge 2*d.* to 3*d.* per cloth. Dyeing is done individually, every woman having her own dyeing-pot and making her own dye. But the women of one household often help each other in this work. Among the women dyers in Kutigi and Sakpe we even find a co-operation which goes beyond the single household. The pots in which the dyeing is done are arranged on a platform outside the compound or part of the village in which the dyers live. When building this platform and putting up the dye-pots all the women of the locality work together—it has been said already that the building and beating of platforms is women's work; the dyeing 'platform' itself thus represents a close analogy to the large work-shed in which the weavers work. This co-operation among the *konú* women does not represent a specific and, as it were, additional productive organization, for it takes place within the existing framework of a closely integrated kindred, formed by these craftsmen and women of alien tribal origin. But here the interesting sociological question arises how this limitation of a woman's craft to a local and kinship group is achieved and

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maintained in a patrilineal and patrilocal society. The explanation is supplied by the endogamous organization of the *konú* groups, which marry mostly into other *konú* families of the same or a neighbouring village. In one or two cases in which intermarriage of a *konú* woman with a Nupe man has taken place, the wife took her craft with her and is practising it in her new home, but now as a completely individual craft, without the help and co-operation of her fellow craftswomen.

Pottery is widespread in Nupe, both in Bida and in the villages. Certain places are famous for their pottery, such as Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and also Bida. The best clay for pottery is found near the river, and this may explain the superiority of the pottery produced in these localities, which are all situated on or near the river. But there exists also a regular trade in potter's clay; women from Badeggi take the excellent clay which is found in that district to Bida and sell it there to the local potters. Other inland places, even rich, busy villages such as Kutigi and Mokwa, have no pottery at all. But Mokwa is only ten miles from Jebba, the great pottery centre, and Kutigi market, on the main trade-route to the west and south, is amply supplied with pots from everywhere. Facilities for trade and communication thus make for specialization, and tend to eliminate inferior local production—a point to which we shall return in another context.

In Bida, too, we find a certain specialization in pottery. Clay lamps and the small pitchers which the Mohammedans use for their ablutions are made everywhere in Bida. Other kinds of pots are made in one *efu* only (the *efu* of the *masagá*, which is situated close to the river). These are large, wide pots used for cooking; tall pots, shaped somewhat like a column, which are in reality three round pots placed on top of each other and formed into one large receptacle—Nupe men and women store their clothes in these pots, which are called *etso*; and small round platters which, broken into small pieces, are used for making tessellated floors. We note that the women are here producing the 'raw material' for another typical woman's work, the making of floors. The making of these pots and platters is generally recognized to be much more difficult and to involve more special training than the manufacture of clay lamps and pitchers. The secret of the technique—for it is, in Nupe eyes, a secret—is only possessed by the women in three compounds in the glass-workers' quarter.[1] Mothers teach their daughters this technique, and we are, again, faced with the question how to account for the limitation of a technique which is transmitted in the female line to a local group formed according to the rule of patrilocal residence. The answer is more or less the same as in the case of the women dyers. The women potters from the *masagá fu* mostly marry into families of the same or a neighbouring *efu*. The girls who occasionally marry into the *masagá* quarter from outside are instructed in the art of pottery by their mothers-in-law. The daughters of the women potters, however, who marry outside (I recorded

[1] This technique involves the use of a crude potter's wheel—the only known case in Africa. Of the different groups of women potters in Nupe only those in Bida and Badeggi use this device. For the description of the technique I must refer to a future publication.

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by the political changes as to account for the decline of chiefly authority. What has changed is rather the spiritual background, the conception, of Kede autonomous chieftainship. It has lost its place in the scheme of Kede political life, which is still growth and expansion. It has been shorn of the qualities of self-responsible and exclusive leadership, which, in this dynamic society, constituted the *raison d'être* of its once absolute power. What remains of the leadership vested in the Kede chief is a leadership moving in the narrow circle of modern administrative boundaries and under the patronage of another, higher, authority. It had to surrender its prerogative of guiding and protecting the movements of the group as they followed, farther and farther afield, the lead of the general economic and cultural development of the country.

This change in the whole political existence of the Kede is most conspicuous in the Kede groups which now lie outside Bida Emirate and the area ruled over by the *Kuta*. Here the liquidation of Kede autonomy could not have been effected without disturbing consequences had Kede chieftainship still held its old meaning. Sentimental bonds between the split-off groups and the mother-country are still conspicuous; but on the whole I have gained the impression that these groups do not (or no longer) seriously miss or resent the separation, or contemplate the possibility of some future reunion. The weakened appeal of political autonomy reflects the general development, political and cultural, that has overtaken the country and separated autonomy from its vital counterparts in social life: economic and cultural unity, and the solidarity of community life. To put it differently: cultural self-realization has become possible outside the narrow political boundaries. I shall have to return to this point; but let me mention here a certain proof of the statement just made—namely, the continued, and even increasing, emigration to those distant Kede settlements which could under no circumstances be anything else but 'minorities' under alien rule.

VII. Social Stratification

The division of political rights and duties in Kede country and, implied in it, the unequal economic advantage enjoyed by the different sections of the population constitute the basis of a rigid social stratification. Ethnic and cultural differences add their

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weight to it in that they coincide with, and are interpreted in the sense of, distinctions implying social gradation. 634 565 563

On the top of the social structure, we have the hereditary ruling class formed by the chief's family group, and below it the second stratum, which comprises the Kede of common status. Though the latter exercise no direct influence upon the policy of the State, they can yet in certain respects range themselves beside the ruling class: if the members of the ruling class decide the fate of the country and derive the main benefits from all political exploits, war or peaceful acquisition of territory—the Kede commoners take an active part in all activities on a tribal scale, even bearing the brunt in the most significant activity, colonization, and benefit to a considerable extent from the political successes of their rulers. Indirectly, by attaching themselves in subservient position to the households and factions of the ruling class, they attain a larger measure of political influence and certain economic advantages not warranted by their hereditary status. Moreover, their racial and cultural affinity with the class above, and the proportionate remoteness from the lowest class beneath, place the Kede commoners on one plane with the ruling group of the country. The lowest stratum comprises the 'original inhabitants', whom tradition paints as having been the subjects of the Kede from mythical times and having had no culture worth mentioning before the advent of the Kede. In fact, they are still, seen with Kede eyes, a 'primitive' and slightly contemptible group; they fail by the cultural standards which the Kede recognize, being pagans, inferior canoemen, and relatively poor. They were excluded from the tribal activities of the Kede and all benefits accruing from them; yet they suffered more than the other groups from the failures of their rulers' policy, unsuccessful wars or revolts, for their country might become the battle-field and their farms and villages be destroyed, while, unlike the ruling classes, they had no reward to expect in the event of success.

The question arises by what machinery the Kede maintained this rigid division into hereditary classes, kept intact the solidarity of their small minority, yet were able at the same time to integrate and bind to loyalty the heterogeneous sections of their State.[1] Our 634 565 182

[1] The strong bond of loyalty that existed between the Kede and their subject groups is illustrated in the historical fact that in the Katcha War certain *kintsoji* groups fought on the side of the Kede against the Emir of Bida.